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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

THE HASTINGS ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS¹

A stranger to the plan and treatment proposed by the editor of this work would presume that reliable inferences about both manner and matter might be drawn from the method exhibited in the present volume. The article "Christianity" could hardly fail to be strategically crucial. It might properly be taken as a better criterion than promises of publisher or editor of the actual animus of the whole undertaking. A reviewer who approaches the volume without preconception of any sort with respect to it might choose between two alternatives. He might read articles upon subjects which are primarily non-theological, such as that with which the volume closes, or "Circumambulation," or "Calendar." From analysis of the scientific preconceptions and method of these discussions he might draw conclusions about the probable policy of the editor with reference to central theological problems. The other alternative would be to go to the heart of the matter at once, and to inspect the paper in which, if anywhere, one would expect to trace finding marks of that particular resultant of the universal interplay of dogmatic factors which controls the work before us as a whole. The latter alternative has been chosen for the present purpose. The article "Christianity" was contributed by Dr. Alfred Ernest Garvie, principal of New College, London. He begins with these propositions, under the rubric "Standpoint of the Discussion":

In recent years in Germany it has been insisted, as by Tröltzsch, that Christianity must be studied as one of the religions of the earth, not from the standpoint of faith, but from that of science, according to the *religious-historical* and not the *dogmatic* method. Before we can go any farther in our discussion, we must determine whether, and how far, this demand is legitimate. What is this religious-historical method which is to replace the dogmatic, and can we by the use of it substitute the standpoint of science for that of faith?

The writer then analyzes the former method, which he reduces to the three principles: (1) criticism; (2) correlation; (3) comparison. His objections to the method are fourfold: (1) "The method has not proved

¹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. III, "Burial"—"Confessions." New York: Scribner; Edinburgh: E. T. Clark, 1911. \$7.00 per volume.

as *objective* as it claims to be." (2) "The method betrays a *bias* that is by no means scientific; it makes assumptions which it has not proved." (3) "The method rules out of court as inadmissible the evidence which Christian faith insists must be heard if Christianity gets a fair trial." (4) "If it be objected that faith must submit to the judgment of science as regards its object, it must be insisted that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and that it is faith alone which is 'the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.'" The standpoint adopted is accordingly Ritschlian in ideal and method, and it would be impertinent in this review to recapitulate the case against this method.

As it looks to a layman to whom the difference between Ritschlians and Mary Baker Eddy amounts methodologically to the fact that the "revelations" which they have received are different, Dr. Garvie better deserves a hearing than his own statement of his position would indicate. There is not as great divergence between his actual method, as shown in the paper, and the method which would be followed from the historical standpoint as there is in formulations of the two procedures. Whether men call their method objective or subjective, it is always both. Whether we call ourselves Ritschlian or historical we are all trying to give back in some sort of symbol the image formed in our minds by contact with the external. While we are doing this, some of us in theory exalt the subjective factor in the process and abase the objective, while others of us do precisely the opposite; but as a matter of fact all of us combine these factors in proportions which may differ less between a given Ritschlian and a given objectivist than between certain representatives of the same school. Dr. Garvie presents, in the first place, under cover of the alleged sanctions of "faith," a synopsis of the dogmatic system which satisfies his mind. This he labels "Christianity." So far the Ritschlian. A positivistic modernist is obliged to exert conscious self-control to read far enough beyond this unconvincing individual or minor-group solipsism to find out that the writer is less parochial than he professes. He actually goes on, quite in the historical form and spirit, to discuss "divergent tendencies in Christianity" (the speculative, the sacramentarian, the practical, the mystical, the evangelical); the "Origin of Christianity" (in which division, "the liberal Protestant view as represented by Harnack, the Modernist Roman Catholic, of which Loisy is pioneer, and the Radicalism of Kalthoff and Pfleiderer" are as fairly represented as the necessary brevity would permit); the "Development of Christianity" (which leaves something to be desired in its attempt to cover the ground in a survey for which Father Tyrrell and

the Harnack-Loisy debate furnish the extreme landmarks); the "History of the Christian Church"; and the "Future of Christianity." Unless the men of Mars are more naïve than we suppose, one of them who had read so far would not be likely to fall under the illusion that a writer, who by his own showing is merely one among many who differ on the interpretation of Christianity, is probably the ultimate standard for them all.

It amuses a man who looks on from a somewhat removed division of labor to observe the mental exercises of another fallible human being who can still imagine that he is getting his knowledge of a subject from a special type of inward illumination, while he is obliged to exhibit his actual sources of opinion by bringing all the above varieties of reaction with the external into evidence. Dr. Garvie establishes his base with this definition: Christianity is "the ethical, historical, universal, monotheistic, redemptive, religion, in which the relation of God to man is mediated by the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ." This formula is bravely esoteric in an obdurately objective world. It is a clean-cut declaration of Christianity as the writer and men of like mind *think* it is. Men who are not ashamed to profess the historical method, however, might content themselves with the writer's own account of what Christianity has been in its workings for demonstration that the subjective definition must be variously modified to correspond with experienced reality. In other words, out of the mouth of this Ritschlian writer himself we have evidence enough to show that Christianity as he has found it in human history is not altogether a Ritschlian procedure.

A scholar may be forgiven his personal equation, even though projected in a provincial definition, and later ("Characteristics of the Christian Religion") reasserted in a series of dogmas, if at the same time he is candid enough to express himself by means of sufficient juxtapositions with contradictory expressions to show to anyone competent to review the argument that it is *ex parte*, and demands restatement from other sides. Inasmuch as it would require infinite knowledge to express theology without bias, one cannot charge such a treatment of *Christianity* as this with illiberality. It is not merely descriptive. It asserts a system of positive judgments. At the same time, it plainly shows how and by whom these judgments are challenged, and it is thus in effect a brief of one among many pretenders to the right of interpreting the Christian religion.

From analysis of this article one gains the impression that the edi-

torial policy of the encyclopaedia is not non-committal, but that it is neither theologically nor scientifically sectarian. This estimate is confirmed by examination of articles in other fields. Perhaps the most striking case in point is the paper on "Chastity" by Mr. Alfred C. Crawley. To the sociologist a synthesis of the Ritschlian manner of thinking about religion and the type of objectivity represented by this survey is impossible. One or the other must in the end be normative. The article "Caves" by Mr. David MacRitchie weighs in the same scale, also "Children" (American) by Dr. A. F. Chamberlain, "Chartism," etc. One finds corroboration of the same estimate in the notable fitness of most of the writers to represent their subjects; although in many cases they are obviously not in theological agreement with the editor. Judging from this volume only, the work deserves the respect, not of an artificially selected public alone, but of scholars generally.

ALBION W. SMALL

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE PENTATEUCH¹

Present-day discussions of the Old Testament presuppose a knowledge of the results of modern criticism. No work of any value on the Pentateuch disregards such information as that presented in Chapman's *An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. The problems of the Pentateuch are so numerous and complicated that the editors of the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* decided to devote to them a separate volume. We are still to remember, however, that the discussion is compressed into this one small book simply because it is treated from a popular point of view, otherwise, we should rightly expect and demand two or three volumes.

The title of the book should include Joshua, as does its discussion, for that book is involved in most of the documentary problems of the Pentateuch. Part I is a preliminary statement of facts, mainly on the history of the discussions of the Hexateuch and the problems which it presents to present-day readers. Part II is the part in which the great task is done.

¹ *An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. By A. T. Chapman. Cambridge: The University Press, 1911. xix+339 pages. \$1.00 net.

The Book of Exodus. By S. R. Driver. Cambridge: The University Press, 1911. lxxii+443 pages. \$1.00 net.

The Book of Numbers. By A. H. McNeile. Cambridge: The University Press, 1911. xxvii+196 pages. 75c net.